United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

32nd PLENARY MEETING

Tuesday, 19 October 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10:20

AGENDA ITEM 47

COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1955

(a) REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/48/48)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.7)

(c) DRAFT DECISION (A/48/48, sect. III)

The PRESIDENT: I now request the Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, Her Excellency Mrs. Lucille Mathurin Mair of Jamaica, to introduce the report of the Preparatory Committee.

Mrs. MATHURIN MAIR (Jamaica), Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations: It is my pleasure and honour to present the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, contained in document A/48/48.

Section I of this report, "Background and introduction", reminds us that at the 76th plenary meeting of the forty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided on the recommendation of the General Committee to include in the agenda of its forty-sixth session this item, "Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995". The General Assembly subsequently adopted a decision (46/472), by which it established a Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, consisting of the members of the General Committee and open to the participation of all Member States, and entrusted the Preparatory Committee with the task of considering and recommending to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session proposals for suitable activities in connection with the observance of the fiftieth anniversary. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in December 1992, considered the first report of the Preparatory Committee (A/47/48). The General Assembly at that time took note of the work of the Committee in 1992 and mandated the Preparatory Committee to continue its work and report to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session. The present report as submitted in response to that decision.

The Preparatory Committee has held five meetings - in February, March, April, May and June. At a particularly important meeting on 22 February 1993, the Committee had before it a note by the Chairman (A/AC.240/1993/L.4), which elaborated on the organization of the work of the Committee, as well as the substantive issues requiring its consideration. This note provided a useful basis for the further deliberations of the Committee, subsequently updated in a draft annotated agenda (A/AC.240/1993/L.5) in March 1993, which was approved.

At its 3rd and 4th meetings in the course of this year, the Committee gave consideration to the basic principles which should be applied in the organization of the fiftieth anniversary and agreed on the following: that the United Nations activities in connection with the fiftieth anniversary should be, to the extent possible, universal in

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93-86909 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.32
9 November 1993

ENGLISH

character and in keeping with the universality of the membership of the United Nations; that there should be a clear allocation of functions and activities between the United Nations system and Member States, to ensure that there was no duplication; that a suitable climax to the fiftieth anniversary would need to be identified, and that the climax should have universal importance, be enduring in its effect and have a suitable symbolic value; and also that activities should be conducted in and made available in all official languages.

On the subject of the theme of the anniversary, the Committee devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to reaching agreement. The common focus of the proposals made was the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental concepts that it expressed. It was also stressed that the theme should be forward-looking and that it should be widely relevant. The theme proposed by the Secretary-General, "We the peoples", did receive considerable support from delegations; there was, however, a majority view that it needed to be extended and made more specific. Following extensive deliberations, a consensus was reached in the Committee on the following theme for the anniversary: "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World". This was accepted as an appropriate expression of the theme of the fiftieth anniversary.

The preparation of a declaration and the establishment of a drafting group were important activities of the Preparatory Committee. It was proposed at a meeting in March that there should be an open-ended drafting group established to prepare a solemn declaration to mark the observance of the anniversary. That declaration should reaffirm adherence by Member States to the principles of the Charter and should guide the Organization's work for the future. That proposal was adopted without dissent. However, there were differences of opinion on when the drafting group should begin its work. Some felt that it would be premature to begin work on a text at that early stage, when it might be overtaken by events and have to be revised later. Others felt that the work should begin immediately, as time was needed to reflect on elements to be included in the declaration. Following discussion, and on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee, it was agreed that the work of the drafting group should take place in two phases: consideration of conceptual issues, in the first instance, to be followed by drafting at a later stage. As a result, the 1st meeting of the open-ended drafting group was held on 22 June 1993, when the conceptual framework for the declaration was discussed.

The action by Member States, including the establishment of national committees, was a major concern of the Preparatory Committee. The Chairman referred in this connection to a note which was sent by the Secretary-General to all Permanent Representatives, drawing attention to the importance of establishing national committees for the fiftieth anniversary to provide a channel for each country's activities with regard to the anniversary.

As paragraph 10 of the report before us indicates, the Secretary-General has received information from a number of States - the 13 here listed - in which national committees have been established, and there are other Member States that have established their intention to establish national committees. The committee wishes to congratulate and encourage those Member States and hopes that others will soon establish national committees.

Also following a request by the Committee, the Secretariat had prepared a paper entitled "Status of the commemorative programme" (A/AC.240/1993/CRP.5). This list compiled by the Secretariat of proposed events and activities was aimed at fostering projects with a global component and outreach that were awaiting funding. The list was divided into three main categories: first, communication/education projects that would promote awareness of the history, structure and functions of the United Nations, increase grass-roots support of the Organization, improve world-wide education about it and highlight the full range of issues on the Organization's agenda; secondly, commemorative projects, which would review past achievements of the United Nations with a view to promoting its future; and thirdly, celebratory events. The Secretariat, as the Committee was informed, had reviewed and evaluated approximately 180 unsolicited proposals. Some met the key criteria for evaluation (particularly the extent to which a particular project furthered the purposes of the United Nations, educated and informed the public, and was self-funding), and these were in the process of development. Much of the programme is still in the planning stage, and few national programmes had been initiated, so it was considered premature to discuss these in detail at this time.

A very important aspect of the preparatory work for the fiftieth anniversary consists of the activities within the United Nations system, as discussed in paragraph 12 of the report.

The Committee noted that the Secretary-General attached great significance to the system-wide nature of the anniversary, particularly since several of the specialized agencies and other organs would also celebrate their own

anniversaries in or around 1995. It was agreed that within the context of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary, an extraordinary opportunity existed to highlight the mutually reinforcing goals of the United Nations and its sister organizations, and it was also noted that these issues were being coordinated through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and focal points at the working level. The Committee continues to monitor this aspect with interest and requests that it be kept informed of further developments in that regard.

The role of non-governmental organizations is also perceived by the Preparatory Committee as a very important element. The fiftieth anniversary should be a broad-based and popular commemoration. It was therefore agreed to encourage the participation of non-governmental organizations to the greatest extent possible, both at the national and at the global levels. These organizations could provide valuable communication and information networks for the fiftieth anniversary as links between the United Nations and its world-wide constituencies. The Committee further agreed that non-governmental organizations could participate in its meetings under the rules governing their participation in the work of the Economic and Social Council.

With regard to financial and administrative issues, the Committee has been informed that the financial situation of the Organization precludes making funds available from the regular budget. The Secretary-General has therefore established for that purpose a Trust Fund for the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations and urges Member States to support that initiative. Support is also being sought from the private sector, including a limited number of global sponsors and international licensees.

In addition to funding for commemorative programmes, the need for adequate secretarial support was discussed by the Committee at several meetings. It was agreed that it is essential to the effective functioning and proper management of the fiftieth anniversary that its secretariat be assured of adequate staff and related resources. The Chairman of the Committee has been requested to raise this concern, this very important need, with the Secretary-General, as appropriate.

Finally, the Preparatory Committee wishes to place before the General Assembly, and to recommend for adoption, the following draft decision, as contained in paragraph 16 of the report. It reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Having considered the report of the Preparatory Committee for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations (A/48/48),

"Takes note of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the fiftieth anniversary in 1993, including the decision that the theme for the commemoration be 'We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World' and that an open-ended drafting group be established to prepare a declaration to be adopted in 1995 to mark the anniversary,

"Decides that the Preparatory Committee should continue its work and report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session." (*A/48/48, para. 16*)

Annexed to this report is the list of the relevant documentation.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, Mr. Richard Butler of Australia, who will introduce draft resolution A/48/L.7 in the course of his statement.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia), Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations: May I begin by expressing my deep appreciation as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee to all those delegations that have worked so hard during the last year to ensure that our work of preparation for a great event in 1995 has started well and that there have been real achievements. I want to thank too Her Excellency the Ambassador of Jamaica for the splendid work she has done today in introducing to the Assembly the report of the Preparatory Committee which is proposed today for adoption by the General Assembly.

We are at a turning point. We have had about one year in which to begin the work of preparation for our fiftieth anniversary. We are at a turning point signified by what I hope will be the unanimous adoption today of the report of the Preparatory Committee, contained in the document before the Assembly (A/48/48).

That turning point has four main features. During the past year, we adopted some organizing principles under which we would pursue the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary and mark its importance. Chief among those

principles is that whatever we do should be of universal significance.

We have adopted a theme for the anniversary as a consequence of an extended debate in which we reflected on the purposes and principles of the Organization. In particular, looking into the future, we reflected on what it was that we wanted to say to the world, especially to the youth of the world, that this Organization was about, and we reached agreement on that theme. That was an important decision because it will suffuse all of what we do in 1995 and as we look into the future.

We also agreed to establish a drafting group, open to all Members of the Assembly, in which we would work on the drawing up of a solemn declaration of 1995, submitted to the Heads of State or Government of all Member States, which would add to the celebratory part of 1995 by setting out a series of signposts that would guide the United Nations as it moves towards the twenty-first century.

We also saw the establishment of a special secretariat for the fiftieth anniversary, a secretariat quite properly headed by an Under-Secretary-General, Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, and charged with the task of ensuring that the Secretary-General is properly aware of 1995 and that the activities that we will design for celebration and promulgation of the anniversary have the full engagement of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Those are the four things that we have achieved in the last year; those are the things that mean that we are at a turning point when we adopt this report today, and that we can turn a corner towards 1994 and 1995 - a period in which we must work actively in drafting, a period in which we must spread the message of our theme around the world, a period in which Mrs. Sorensen and her secretariat can begin to set in concrete the celebratory and other aspects of 1995.

In the latter context, may I say that I am aware that there are discussions under way in this House at present about resources for that secretariat. In this connection I would draw attention to paragraph 15 of our draft report, in which the view of Member States is made clear to the effect that the secretariat charged with managing the fiftieth anniversary should be given adequate resources - and I want to underline that today. It is the view of the Committee - and I am sure the Secretary-General is aware of this - that Mrs. Sorensen and her secretariat must be given adequate resources. There is no question in my mind that this can be done from within existing staff establishment - possibly, for example, from the Department of Public Information - so as to ensure that without negative budgetary effects the resources required are allocated to Mrs. Sorensen and her special task.

The report of the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee contains a recommended draft decision in paragraph 16, which our Rapporteur has already introduced. It remains for me simply to say that I commend that draft decision to the Assembly, and I hope that it will adopted unanimously.

There is also a draft resolution before the Assembly in the context of this agenda item. It relates to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Moscow, signed on 30 October 1943. At the last meeting of the Preparatory Committee, it was proposed that a brief commemorative session of the General Assembly should be held on 30 October 1993 in order to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security, adopted in Moscow on 30 October 1943, in which reference was made to the establishment of a general international organization, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States and open to membership by all such States, for the maintenance of international peace and security. The proposal that was made to commemorate that event of 50 years ago was unanimously adopted by the Preparatory Committee.

As a consequence, in our role as Chairman of that Committee, I have submitted, in the name of Australia, a draft resolution, contained in document A/48/L.7, which quite simply calls for the Assembly to commemorate in its plenary meeting on 1 November this year the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security, adopted in Moscow on 30 October 1943. We cannot do this on 30 October because that is a Saturday. The nearest day, therefore, is Monday, 1 November. I propose that this draft resolution, which is in conformity with the expressed wish of the Preparatory Committee, be also adopted unanimously.

I will bring my remarks to a conclusion by expressing again the gratitude that I feel as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the very great interest that all delegations are showing in this work. I would also express the hope that we will have a good 1994, a year that will see an increase in the tempo in which we will begin work on drafting what will be an important declaration for 1995 and a year in which the secretariat for the fiftieth anniversary, properly resourced, should be enabled to continue its planning for a truly historic celebration, in 1995, of the fiftieth anniversary of this Organization.

Mr. RIABIKA (Ukraine) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The United Nations, since its founding in 1945, when States, manifesting their goodwill and the desire to live in peace and friendship, laid the base for a truly universal Organization, has played an ever-greater role in the life of the international community.

For me, as a member of the Parliament of the Republic of Crimea - an integral part of Ukraine - it is gratifying to recall that the decision on the establishment of this universal international Organization to ensure peace and security was adopted at the Crimea Conference, held in Yalta in February 1945.

It is our view that the remaining two years before the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization must be used to the utmost to determine the areas of activity and the role of the Organization for generations to come. It is therefore extremely important that during this period States Members of the United Nations exert maximum efforts for the drafting and implementation of coordinated proposals to reform the Organization and adapt its structures to the demands of the times. The activities of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations are designed to facilitate this process.

The anniversary should be used to disseminate knowledge about the United Nations and the expansion of its activities in order to familiarize the broadest circles of the world's population with the aims and tasks of the United Nations. That, in turn, would promote support for the United Nations in the fulfilment of all of its plans and initiatives.

Taking into account the importance of the upcoming event and also the fact that Ukraine was one of the founders of the United Nations, the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, by his order of 18 May 1993 set up the National Committee for the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Anatoly Zlenko. It consists of heads of the leading ministries and governmental institutions, prominent public and political figures, parliamentarians, scientists and representatives of cultural and educational establishments.

In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Preparatory Committee, a draft programme of events which will take place at the national level within the framework of the United Nations commemoration was worked out and submitted for the Government's approval. The programme includes, inter alia, the holding in Ukraine, and particularly in the Crimea, of international scientific conferences, concerts, exhibits and cultural and sports events, as well as the issuance of postage stamps dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary. There are also plans for the establishment in Kiev of a memorial park in which, on this occasion, trees will be planted by prominent political and public figures.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations marks a special date in the calendar of international life. Bringing us back once again to the remote past, it prompts us to take a closer look at the world to decide what we can do to make the work of the United Nations more effective in fulfilling those functions and tasks which were allocated to it nearly half a century ago.

It is generally known that not a single historic date is oriented only towards the past. Moreover, the best way to observe the anniversary of turning points of history is to concentrate on unsettled issues, to reassess the existing situation creatively and to outline the prospects for future development.

In this context, we propose the convening, in the framework of the United Nations commemoration, of an international peace summit to summarize the development of the world community in the post-confrontation era and outline the future world order for the next century. The aims of this conference derive from the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). Those aims include the formulation of the concept of peace and security in the post-confrontation era.

In our view, such a forum should be timed to the Organization's anniversary and organized under the aegis of the United Nations, because the development of contemporary international relations cannot be imagined without this international Organization, whose prestige and reputation are universally recognized as very high.

I should also like to emphasize another important factor in favour of holding such a conference within the United Nations. Only the United Nations has the experience to convene global high-level forums to consider complicated issues and set forth comprehensive approaches. Such meetings could have a great mobilizing effect on world developments, as attested to by the 1992 Conference in Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, it would seem appropriate in the course of the global international conference to discuss and adopt new proposals and ideas, the realization of which would energize the Organization's activity and give it new impetus.

As never before, we have every reason to see the United Nations as a powerful instrument capable of maintaining international peace and security, strengthening justice and human rights, and ensuring, to quote the United Nations Charter, "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". This would correspond to the motto of the commemoration: "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World".

Mr. PIZARRO (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: In October 1995, the United Nations will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. This will provide an opportunity for retrospection and an analysis of our achievements and failures, and on that basis to conduct a profound assessment of the challenges that lie ahead for this Organization.

In December 1992, the Assembly considered the first report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. Chile, which is a member of that Committee and has been honoured with a vice-chairmanship, has worked hard to promote this initiative. Similarly, at the national level, work has begun on the basic principles to be applied in organizing this celebration, in the total conviction that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary offers an extraordinary opportunity for highlighting the importance of the United Nations and the other organizations of the system.

The Government of Chile has studied the note sent by the Secretary-General on 3 February this year, in which he brings to our attention the importance of establishing national committees for the fiftieth anniversary to provide a channel for each country's activities with regard to the anniversary. In that connection, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the establishment of the national committee in our own country is now being considered from the legal standpoint, and we hope that it will be ready to begin its activities by the end of this year, at the latest. The National Committee will be entrusted with the coordination at the national and international levels of our country's participation in all the activities for the celebration, and will also be in charge of organizing and publicizing all activities to promote awareness of its work.

It has also been considered fundamental to the desired success of this National Committee that it be composed of a broad spectrum of representatives of our principal national organizations. To that purpose, legal provisions stipulate that it be composed of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Relations; the Ministry of Public Education; the Ministry of National Defence; the Ministry of the Secretary-General of the Government; the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation; the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Republic; universities; and the directorships of the library, archives and museums; and that it be open to other institutions that might be invited by the Committee towards the attainment of its goal.

The motto already agreed upon - "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World" - gives us an appropriate framework for the success of this initiative. That is why we support the work of the Preparatory Committee and in particular the various publicity programmes and activities related to the Organization's achievements and potential for the future, so that we might make it a useful tool in the quest for solutions to the most burning problems afflicting the people of the world.

During the general debate, one delegation quite rightly pointed out that the United Nations itself should reflect the principles it advocates. Unfortunately, the reality today does not bear out that assertion. The United Nations has not been able to adapt with the requisite speed to the changes our world is experiencing. That is why work should be done, on a priority basis and with the fiftieth anniversary as a deadline, to achieve the restructuring of the United Nations, an appeal that has resounded through the statements of delegations in the general debate.

Among the reforms that we feel are most urgent is that of the Security Council, with a view to achieving equitable geographical representation. This reform, however, should also make the Council efficient and a model of efficacy for any regional or subregional organization and the peoples of the world in general. At the same time, the other organs of the United Nations system need to proceed along the same lines so that, in all spheres, efficiency and harmonious action become the common denominator.

The convening of the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 will be a key event in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In that respect, the chance to discuss the problems of human security - in particular unemployment, poverty and social integration - will be a unique opportunity for placing the human person at the heart of the concerns of the United Nations and, at the same time, demonstrating the significance and global importance of our Organization.

The deep distrust that persists among the protagonists on the international scene, the growing strategic interests that are at stake despite the end of the cold war, the vast economic disparities, the increasing competition for

international prestige, and the crisis of nationalism - all constitute a genuine threat to the security of nations.

At the same time, we note that the world has changed, that bipolarity has ended, that we are heading towards global understandings, that divisive barriers are being eliminated and that States are being recognized without ideological litmus tests. In other words, the world and the United Nations have begun to seek and find modern formulas for understandings between States and innovative solutions for the problems that persist.

Allow me at this point a personal digression. What I have just said is applicable to situations such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, to what is going on in some of the republics of the former Soviet Union, and to the case of China and Taiwan, where being members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council and the Asian Development Bank should be a first step in encouraging them to work together in international organizations.

Resolving the questions I have mentioned is the task that lies ahead of the international community, and a duly restructured United Nations must channel its efforts to the attainment of that objective.

As we shall soon celebrate our fiftieth anniversary we must redouble our efforts and strengthen our political will so that by then we shall have modernized and democratized our Organization, in order to enable it to face the challenges before it and focus its action on resolving the political, economic and social problems now threatening humankind. Chile pledges its determination to work from this day forward on that huge task.

Mr. TELLO (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: In almost exactly two years the United Nations, shaped by a group of visionary statesmen in 1945, will reach its half century. That important anniversary is a source of special satisfaction for the States that believed from the outset in an international community organized on basic principles of coexistence. It also provides a unique opportunity for thoughtful reflection on the Organization 's achievements and on its future.

The United Nations has come a long way since its founding in San Francisco at the end of the Second World War. In many ways it has exceeded the expectations of the authors of its Charter.

From a strictly quantitative standpoint, we note that membership has more than tripled, as a result of the decolonization process undertaken by the Organization and, more recently, as a consequence of the end of the cold war.

While this aspect is significant, the qualitative changes are in fact more important. United Nations activities are now very wide-ranging - from peace-keeping in various corners of the world to the active promotion of the economic and social development of peoples, and from the protection of human rights to the preservation of the environment. We could say, to paraphrase the philosophers, that there is nothing that touches human beings that is not the concern of the United Nations.

To keep its central role on the international scene, the Organization must respond to change by recognizing its shortcomings and correcting anachronisms.

My delegation welcomes the Preparatory Committee's decision to establish an open-ended drafting group to prepare a solemn declaration to be adopted here on 24 October 1995. Despite the view held by some, we must not waste what little time remains and must start as soon as possible the substantive work that will lead to a document whose content reflects what we expect of the United Nations in the next century.

In Mexico's opinion, that important document could contain three major chapters. The first would examine the ground we have covered in the first 50 years, highlighting the Organization's achievements; the second would be devoted to the problems facing the Organization today; and the third, which would no doubt be the most extensive, would conclude with a look towards the future in order to direct our efforts and those of our successors.

Some have expressed the view in the Preparatory Committee that it would be premature to take pen in hand and begin the drafting, because - they say - of the speed with which changes in the world order are taking place. In my delegation's opinion, they are being prudent to a fault. Any journey, however long and arduous, begins with the first step. We must continue the exchange of views that began a few short months ago and begin to draft a text that we can alter as events require. What we cannot and must not do is to leave everything to the last minute, since waiting so long would doom the declaration to failure.

In accordance with the request of this Assembly, a National Committee charged with the commemoration of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary has already been set up in my country. In view of the importance my Government attaches to this event, it was decided that the Foreign Secretary would chair the Committee, which is

made up of personages from governmental, academic and cultural fields linked to the United Nations. The Mexican Committee has already held two meetings, at which its members thoroughly examined various programmes to disseminate knowledge of the purposes, principles and work of the United Nations in order to make the Mexican people aware of the Organization's activities, and lead them to support those activities.

Measures considered to date include the preparation and publication of books and other materials, the production of radio and television programmes, the organization of seminars and round tables on various subjects, with the participation of Mexican and foreign experts, and the issuance of postage stamps. I shall soon have the privilege of informing the Preparatory Committee of the decisions the Mexican national body will be taking in order to assure the attainment of its objectives.

Mexico is resolutely and enthusiastically planning the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We are prepared to carry out an exercise in deep reflection, so that this very significant event will not amount merely to expressions of jubilation and formal celebrations. We are determined to continue to cooperate fully with the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia, and with Under-Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen, with a view to ensuring that the fiftieth anniversary is accorded all the formal and substantive significance that it merits.

Mr. JACOB (India): My delegation attaches importance to the celebrations to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We have been taking an active part in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee, which is being ably guided by its Chairman, Mr. Richard Butler, the Permanent Representative of Australia. We should like to compliment Under-Secretary-General, Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, who has been assisting the Preparatory Committee efficiently and with devotion. Her wholehearted and receptive approach to the ideas expressed by various delegations augur well for our collective endeavour to make the celebrations successful. The newsletter on the preparations that she has started to publish is really useful.

For our part, we have formed in India a national committee, under the chairmanship of the External Affairs Minister, in connection with the fiftieth-anniversary celebrations. I assure the Assembly that the Government of India and this national committee will do all in their power to ensure that the celebrations are meaningful and successful.

The completion of 50 years of the existence of the United Nations is an occasion for observance - indeed, for celebration. The Organization, by its very existence, has served as an anchor of hope for humanity. Having emerged as a harbinger of peace in a war-ravaged world, it has survived the trials and tribulations of half a century. The United Nations remained a silver lining on the cloudy horizon of the cold war. Today, it has re-emerged as a major actor in international affairs, assuming unprecedented dimensions. The anniversary will be an occasion for helping to shape a new United Nations.

Anniversaries are occasions for celebration as well as for recollection. We certainly should rejoice at the distance travelled. More important, however, is the road ahead, with the ever-receding horizons that beckon us. In our view, the agenda for the fiftieth anniversary celebrations should be closely focused on the Organization's agenda for the future. Exhibitions, television programmes, films and music performances could certainly form a useful backdrop for this wider endeavour, but they should by no means become the be-all and end-all of the exercise. It is my delegation's view that such a conceptual framework would help us to concentrate on furthering the objectives of the United Nations and on the responsibility that it will have to shoulder in the coming decades.

Our own approach to observance of the fiftieth anniversary will be to place emphasis on those activities that can help to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations, not only as a political body but also as a catalyst for economic and social development. Concerts and exhibitions are useful means of increasing awareness, among the masses, of the United Nations, but of greater importance will be those activities that enhance the Organization's constructive role in world affairs. The occasion should be used to reflect on the achievements of the Organization and to chart a well-defined course for its future. We attach particular importance, in this context, to the activities of specialized agencies, which should formulate programmes, specifically designed for the anniversary, that will reach their targets by 1995. Observance of the anniversary should mark, not only the culmination of the reform process, but also the beginning of new activities that will give the Organization a better image in the world.

Last but not least, it will be important to ensure that the anniversary functions are universal in character, and are seen to be so. Our purpose will be better served if they are dispersed over the globe rather than centred around United Nations Headquarters or confined to a small group

of countries. In our view, the purpose of the exercise should take precedence over procedural constraints relating to organizational and financial arrangements.

During the meetings of the Preparatory Committee, Member States expressed wide-ranging and sometimes differing views on various aspects of the fiftieth-anniversary celebrations. It is our hope that, in the true spirit of our work in the United Nations, the preparatory work will be done after the viewpoints of Member States have been harmonized. With these words, my delegation would like to endorse the draft decision of the General Assembly that the Preparatory Committee should continue its work.

Mr. HAJNOCZI (Austria): Let me begin by thanking Ambassador Butler for his able leadership as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. After extensive deliberations, the Preparatory Committee has achieved consensus on the theme for the fiftieth anniversary:

> "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World".

The first words of the Charter seem to us to set forth a particularly meaningful theme. "We the peoples" clearly expresses the concept that the United Nations constituency is not limited to Governments - that it is mankind.

We ought to seize the opportunity of this occasion to show to the individual citizen the multiple effects of United Nations activities. The support for the United Nations that we should thereby build in the electorate would be transformed into increased support from Governments.

We should heighten the awareness of programmes sponsored by the United Nations and of the Organization's achievements, deepen knowledge about the Organization, and demonstrate that it reaches out to every individual on the globe.

In a nutshell, the fiftieth anniversary could be the biggest public-relations event for the United Nations system. Therefore, particular emphasis should be laid on cooperation with the media and with the education sector. We want to imbue, not just the adult population, but even more so the next generation with the ideals of the United Nations. Such an approach, which might be called a public-awareness operation, would not put a heavy burden on the United Nations budget. Rather, in our view, would it depend on creativity, initiative and the ability to attract interest in sectors beyond governmental structures.

A well-deserved tribute must be paid to Under-Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen and her predecessor Joseph Verner Reed and their able colleagues in the Secretariat who have been reaching out to the public in their work.

We share their view that the fiftieth anniversary should be commemorated by activities at the global level. Certainly, United Nations Headquarters in New York and United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi offer excellent bases and should be equally used. Likewise, the many United Nations offices in Member States can play a significant role. The celebration of this important anniversary requires a truly system-wide effort.

We expect that many of the activities will be undertaken at national, regional and local level by non-governmental organizations. Therefore the early establishment of national committees is vital to initiate, liaise, focus and coordinate activities.

Austria will actively participate in the drafting of a solemn declaration to mark the observance of the anniversary in 1995. But our idea of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary is not a kind of ceremonial birthday party on 24 October 1995. We prefer a broader perspective, viewing this commemoration as a substantial matter encompassing many activities and major meetings throughout 1995, meetings such as the World Summit for Social Development and the World Conference on Women. For what would be the credibility of a solemn reaffirmation of adherence to the principles of the Charter on one day if we did not live up to them every day of the year, by striving, united, for a better world.

Mr. CATARINO (Portugal): Since this is the first time I have had the honour to speak in plenary meeting at this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, please allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election and wish you all the best in the conduct and fulfilment of your duties.

Portugal follows with great interest the work of the United Nations and the constant enlargement of its activities for the benefit of humanity. The sphere of influence of the Organization has increased from day to day, covering areas of the utmost importance, such as peace-keeping operations, economic development and cooperation, environmental action, humanitarian assistance and human rights - to mention but a few of the very

important fields that have a real impact on the well-being of the international community.

In this respect the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is a special and unique opportunity to portray the work of the Organization and to present a comprehensive picture of our efforts to attain goals to make a better world for us all.

That being so, I should like to inform the Assembly that the Government of Portugal is taking the steps necessary to establish its national committee for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We hope, therefore, to be in a position in the near future to announce the establishment of our national committee.

Mr. LOVINSKIY (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The Russian Federation attaches great significance to preparations for celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We assess very highly the work of the Preparatory Committee for this anniversary, under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Ambassador Richard Butler. We also support his recommendations.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations must, in our view, become a compelling reaffirmation of the important role of the Organization in the life of the international community and the dedication of States Members of the United Nations to the full application of the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter 50 years ago.

In achieving international consensus on fundamental international problems, States are called on fully to make use of and develop the potential of the United Nations. Russian governmental bodies and public opinion have already undertaken preparatory work in connection with this notable event in the life of the international community and a national committee of the Russian Federation is being established.

We believe that it is extremely appropriate that the beginning of the process for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary is taking place at this time. Fifty years ago at the Moscow Conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, which took place from 19 to 30 October 1943, the concept of the establishment of an international organization for the maintenance of international peace and security was proclaimed for the first time. It was precisely then in that Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security that the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and China stated the need for the establishment of such an organization based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States and open to membership by all States, large or small.

The delegation of the Russian Federation supports the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Australia in A/48/L.7 and calls for its adoption by consensus.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt): The Assembly has before it a very thoughtful and comprehensive report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. The report reflects, and in depth, the discussions in the Preparatory Committee, which was successfully steered by its very able Chairman, Ambassador Butler of Australia. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen and her very able and devoted staff.

As repeatedly stated by most delegations we are looking forward to a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary which will not be limited to festive celebrations. My delegation is of the view that the fiftieth anniversary provides us with a unique opportunity to reflect on the achievements, the shortcomings and the performance of the United Nations since its establishment.

We should also be able to project into the future and seek to improve and enhance the performance of the United Nations. We would like to consider the challenges that the Organization will encounter in the future and how it will cope with those challenges. What areas should be reformed? What will the United Nations do to meet the challenges of the future?

The founders of our Organization envisaged, through the Charter, a very delicate structure for the United Nations, a structure that survived the ravages of the cold war; now, with the end of the ideological confrontation between East and West, the United Nations has a better opportunity to meet the challenges of the future. Therefore it is only natural to expect that States Members of the Organization will use the fiftieth anniversary to review the balance sheet of the last 50 years and prepare for the future.

Egypt has already established a national committee to prepare for the fiftieth anniversary, and will spare no effort

in contributing to the meaningful success of the commemoration.

Mr. SALMI (Finland): My country agrees with the many representatives who have indicated that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will be a special occasion for us, an occasion for reflection, taking stock and also action towards further developing and enhancing the work of our Organization, the better to meet the manifold and ever-increasing needs of the international community.

My delegation has already had the opportunity of participating actively here at Headquarters in the work on the preparation of the anniversary, and I have the pleasure to inform the Assembly that my Government is now taking steps to form a national committee for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The committee will enjoy leadership at a high-level and will include a very wide spectrum of Finnish society.

The PRESIDENT: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/48/L.7, as well as the draft decision contained in section III of the report of the Preparatory Committee contained in document A/48/48.

Mr. CHEN Jian (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: Before the draft decision contained in the report of the Preparatory Committee is adopted, I should like to point out that the Chinese translation of the draft decision contains a language error in the second preambular paragraph, which mentions the theme for the commemoration. The present Chinese text does not fully reflect the spirit and meaning of the original English.

The Chinese Government attaches high importance to the activities for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary and has established a national committee headed by Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. The theme of the fiftieth anniversary will be widely publicized in China; therefore, how the English for the theme of the commemoration is reflected in the Chinese text is a major question. I do not wish to hold up the adoption of the theme today; however, with your permission, Mr. President, I should like to conduct consultations with the parties concerned in order to find the proper Chinese wording.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for drawing our attention to the deficiency in translation, and I shall avail myself of his undertaking to consult with the Secretariat to ensure that the translation is corrected for any future document.

On that understanding, the Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.7 as well as the draft decision contained in section III of the report (A/48/48) of the Preparatory Committee.

I now call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. SUKHODREV (Director of Security Council and General Assembly Affairs): Under the terms of the draft decision contained in section III of document A/48/48, the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, decide that the Preparatory Committee for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations should continue its work and report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, and that an open-ended drafting group should be established to prepare a declaration to be adopted in 1995 to mark the anniversary.

It is anticipated that the Preparatory Committee would need to hold 24 meetings during 1994, and these would have to be added to the calendar of conferences. The extent to which the Organization's permanent capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences for 1994-1995.

However, provisions are made under section 25 of the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995 not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation but also for meetings that would be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings and conferences are consistent with the pattern of meetings in past years.

Consequently, should the General Assembly adopt the draft decision contained in section III of document A/48/48, no additional appropriation would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

The PRESIDENT: We turn first to draft resolution A/48/L.7, entitled "Fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/48/L.7?

Draft resolution A/48/L.7 was adopted (resolution 48/6).

The PRESIDENT: We turn now to the draft decision contained in section III of the report of the Preparatory Committee, document A/48/48.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision contained in section III of the report (A/48/48) of the Preparatory Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The PRESIDENT: Under the terms of the resolution just adopted, the General Assembly will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security on Monday, 1 November 1993. I should like to point out that this commemoration will take place in the afternoon as the second item.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 47.

AGENDA ITEM 155

ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.5)

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/48/L.5.

I call upon the representative of Belgium to introduce that draft resolution.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: On 20 August this year the 12 countries members of the European Community requested the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly entitled "Assistance in mine clearance". That item quickly gained broad support within the Organization and among Member States, leading to the formulation of draft resolution A/48/L.5, which I have the honour to introduce to the Assembly today on behalf of the sponsors, of which there are now 88. I ask the indulgence of members as I read out all their names.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/48/L.5 are: Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America.

I should like to thank sincerely all the delegations that have given their support to and contributed to the drafting of this text. The Secretariat, and in particular members of the mine-clearing unit, several United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, have shared their experience with us. We should like to express our deep gratitude to them.

The sponsors are submitting their draft resolution to the Assembly because of the catastrophic situation created by the massive presence of mines and other unexploded devices in countries that have experienced armed conflict.

Under the second preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/48/L.5, the Assembly would express dismay at the high number of victims of mines and other unexploded devices. Each year, such devices indiscriminately kill and injure countless innocent victims, often children, long after weapons have fallen silent.

Under the third, fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs, the Assembly would recall the adverse social and economic consequences of the presence of mines. Vast territories are today unfit for the resumption of economic activities or the return of refugees already sorely tested by conflict. Furthermore, the presence of mines seriously jeopardizes the safety of teams participating in humanitarian missions, peace-keeping and rehabilitation and seriously hampers their action.

In the following preambular paragraphs, the Assembly would recall that in his report "An Agenda for Peace" the Secretary-General had already recognized the growing importance of mine clearance and that the Security Council had fully supported that report in a presidential statement of 26 February 1993. In resolution 47/120 B the General Assembly also recognized the relevance of the Secretary-General's analysis. I would only add that in his latest report on the work of the Organization the Secretary-General states:

> "Of all the tasks involved in setting a nation on a new road to peace and prosperity, perhaps none has the immediate urgency of mine clearance." *(A/48/1, para. 459)*

Further, the inhumane weapons Convention, which of course relates primarily to prevention and humanitarian laws, contains in Protocol II articles calling for international cooperation in the removal of mines.

Under the twelfth to fourteenth preambular paragraphs, the Assembly would note with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peace-keeping operations of provisions relating to mine clearance and would welcome the establishment within the Secretariat of a coordinated mine-clearance programme. It also commends the activities already undertaken in this connection by the United Nations system, particularly by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations.

The operative part of the draft resolution highlights the importance of United Nations coordination of activities designed to facilitate the solution of problems linked by the failure to remove mines.

To achieve such coordination it is necessary to begin by analysing the precise parameters of the problem the United Nations, its agencies, Member States and non-governmental organizations must confront because of mines. Then, an inventory must be drawn up of means, including financial means, available to them in dealing with the problem.

In operative paragraphs 4 and 5, therefore, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, before its forty-ninth session, a comprehensive report on the problems caused by the increasing presence of mines and other unexploded devices and on the manner in which the United Nations contribution to the solution of problems relating to mine clearance could be strengthened. That report should also consider the financial aspects of activities related to mine clearance, and in that connection the General Assembly would ask the Secretary-General to consider the advisability of establishing a voluntary trust fund.

If we are to assist the Secretary-General in drawing up his report, many countries must extend their cooperation by providing him with information, data and the views and suggestions of their Governments. That is the purpose of operative paragraph 6.

Draft resolution A/48/L.5, before the General Assembly today, reflects the growing concern of the international community at the devastation caused by mines and other unexploded devices in countries emerging from armed conflict. On behalf of the sponsors, I express the hope that it will be adopted without a vote.

Speaking now on behalf of the European Community and its member States, I pledge our full cooperation in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General. We hope that will contribute to the creation of an exhaustive chart showing the needs resulting from the presence of mines, and the means available for meeting them.

The European Community and its member States will be following with special attention the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report. In our view, today's draft resolution is but the first stage of a long-term effort. We hope that at its forty-ninth session the General Assembly will continue its deliberations on this item with a view to considering effective, urgent measures to help countries affected by the presence of mines to make progress towards social rehabilitation and economic reconstruction.

Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) *(interpretation from French)*: I wish first of all to convey the gratitude of my delegation to the representative of Belgium and to the initial sponsors of draft resolution A/48/L.5, that is the countries members of the European Community, which have themselves assisted many countries in mine-clearance operations.

Afghanistan has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, and I am addressing the Assembly on this item because my country is in a tragic and, unfortunately, typical situation. In terms of the size of its population, Afghanistan heads the list of countries threatened by the dangers posed by mines. We learn from the report of the Secretary-General of June 1992 that ours is a typical case.

In my country, 45,000 mines have been documented in an area of 25 square kilometres. In all of Afghanistan there are undoubtedly more than 10 million mines. The danger continues even as we meet in this Hall; it is grave. In many villages children are wounded every day as they play on mined ground. That shows how serious the problem is. Soviet military aggression in Afghanistan has ended; the Red Army is no longer on our territory. But, with more than 10 million mines, a latent aggression continues, with its attendant delayed danger of death or

serious injury. This is a case of "delayed aggression", with time-bombs scattered in an unknown pattern invisible to the naked eye. Most wars of aggression end with the withdrawal of the aggressor, with a cease-fire, with a document, or with a hand-shake before the cameras. But this kind of aggression persists after the conclusion of peace.

In the general debate, at the 24th meeting, on 11 October, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan stressed the importance of this problem, and noted my delegation's support for a draft resolution on this item. Those are the reasons why Afghanistan has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

I am grateful to the representative of Belgium also for having clarified a number of points that are made only between the lines of the draft resolution but that appear to have been clear in the minds of the initial sponsors. Should the draft resolution be adopted today - I hope without a vote - my delegation will be satisfied with the text as it stands. But if the initial sponsors wish to have suggestions for possibly important improvements and additions, it would be better to take note of these.

Among those points, let me note that it is not only human beings that are threatened by mines. Domestic animals, notably the cattle used for agricultural and other work, and wild animals can be gravely injured and could die from the effects of their wounds. This should certainly be of interest to the United Nations.

Since the Second World War, technology has made progress, in this case, unfortunately, with harmful consequences for mankind. Mines from the First World War were easily found, as they were made of metal, but most of today's mines are made of plastics, which are terribly difficult to detect. That is why mine clearance is an extremely important specialization in today's armies and ministries of defence.

A very important point that is not clear in the draft resolution is that the presence of mines militates against the return of war refugees, who wish to return now that the war has ended. But when they learn from those who have already returned that children have been injured when they stepped on mines, they are no longer so eager to return voluntarily.

The question of reconstruction and rehabilitation has been mentioned. This is particularly important in agriculture at three stages: sowing, irrigation - so important for developing countries where there is little rainfall - and the harvest. At each stage there is a danger for farmers - and for their wives and children, who are generally involved in these tasks, particularly in the harvest - of severe injury, or even death, because of lack of medical treatment. Those who are seriously injured are at the mercy of all types of infections and gangrene, which can be fatal.

In other areas, such as the reconstruction of roads, and other means of communication - above all, in the so-called war-stricken countries, a sad new term - Afghanistan is again at the top of the list.

If additions are to be made to the draft resolution, at the very least the question of returning war refugees to their homes should be included in the preamble. An important item should also be added to the operative part: an urgent appeal to countries able to assist those most seriously threatened by mines to undertake mine-clearance programmes, including the training of local sappers. Afghanistan has already received such assistance from many countries represented here, including Australia, which assisted in the training of local personnel for mine clearance, personnel who have done a great deal and are still at work. The Afghanistan operation is still huge, however, and we hope soon to receive expanded, concrete assistance, including assistance from Australia, which, for budgetary reasons, I believe, ceased for a time.

We hope to see the draft resolution adopted without a vote, by acclamation, under your presidency, Sir. I assure you that among the resolutions we shall be adopting in this manner this one will indeed be historic.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) (*interpretation from French*): Austria welcomes the initiative of the European Community in having the question "Assistance in mine clearance" added to the agenda. We are pleased to be co-authors of the draft resolution with that title, which has just been introduced by the Permanent Representative of Belgium, and of course we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The Austrian delegation is extremely alarmed by the growing presence of mines and other unexploded devices in territories devastated by armed conflicts. The presence in the ground of these mines, long after hostilities have ended, is a grave obstacle to the restoration of peace and the return to normal productive daily life.

It is often those in the most disadvantaged sector of the population who run the greatest risk of being wounded, killed or permanently disfigured by mines. They are often

forced by the economic constraints from which they suffer to return to areas that are unsafe because of the continued presence of mines. The representative of Afghanistan, in a very relevant statement, has just addressed this specific problem.

The intense suffering inflicted on the very high number of victims of mines, primarily among the civilian population, is an unacceptable affront to the conscience of mankind. The number of incidents involving children is particularly appalling.

We know, to cite only one example, that in Cambodia 200 to 300 men, women and children are torn apart by mines every month. For those who lose an arm, a leg or their sight, for those who are otherwise severely wounded by the explosion of one of the 4 million to 7 million mines still remaining in Cambodia, peace has not yet arrived. They may never be able fully to enjoy the results of peace in their country. Statistics on the number of mines in various regions are horrifying: 9 million to 10 million in Afghanistan; 9 million in Angola; 5 million to 10 million in Iraq; 5 million in Kuwait; 1 million to 2 million in Western Sahara; 1 million to 2 million in Mozambique; 1 million in Somalia; and 1 million in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The letter (A/48/490) dated 8 October 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia addressed to the Secretary-General reminds us that the problem of land mines also affects countries in central Europe. It states that there are some 3 million mines in Croatia. It is clear that the country's reconstruction will be greatly slowed by this unresolved problem.

In our opinion, the international community should make every effort to strengthen cooperation to deal more effectively with the problem of land mines. In this context, the Foreign Ministry and the Defence Ministry of the Republic of Austria supported a symposium organized last May by an Austrian concern on the subject of mine clearance as it relates to the challenge of repatriation and rehabilitation. The symposium brought together military and civilian experts on mine clearance, political analysts and representatives of relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

In their conclusions, the participants emphasized the importance of mine clearance for the success of all repatriation and rehabilitation programmes. They also emphasized that mine-clearance activities require careful preparation and training and that medical supplies for those involved should be given the highest priority. The participants also noted the imperative need to accompany mine clearance operations with education programmes for the local population. The symposium recommended the establishment of a central repository for information and technical databases.

We thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for having so often emphasized the urgency of the problem of land mines. We welcome the establishment within the Secretariat of a coordinated mine-clearance programme, with the participation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and other competent bodies. We note with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandate of several peace-keeping operations of provisions relating to mine clearance. We are following very closely the efforts made by the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning the problem of land mines.

The international community explicitly recognized the horrendous nature of land-mines by concluding the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and in particular the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II). Austria has ratified the Convention and the Protocol. We urge all countries that have not yet ratified the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible.

We believe also that the possibility of a moratorium on the export of land-mines should be carefully considered.

In this context, we have noted with interest the convening by the Secretary-General of a review conference to amend the aforementioned Convention and in particular its Protocol II. In our view, it would be a good idea to view this review conference as a forum for obtaining greater adherence. It would also provide an opportunity to build on existing legal norms in order to find more effective solutions to the problem of the indiscriminate use of land-mines, which are mutilating men, women and children all over the globe.

Those were the comments the Austrian delegation wished to make at this stage of our deliberations.

Mr. INDERFURTH (United States of America): Uncleared land-mines are a major source of human tragedy as well as of regional instability. The United States Government estimates that there are more than 85 million uncleared land-mines scattered in 62 countries throughout the world. The number is growing each day.

Approximately 150 people - most of them civilians - are killed or injured each week by land-mines. Land-mines are also a regional destabilizing force. They hinder economic reconstruction and development, inhibit the return of refugees and create a source of chaos in countries striving for political stability.

The United States urges the world community to turn its attention to this problem now. It must be addressed from two sides. First, we need to remove or neutralize those mines already laid. Secondly, we must cut the flow of new mines. The United States Government is pleased to co-sponsor this draft resolution, which invites Member States and non-governmental organizations to provide de-mining assistance, and which asks the Secretary-General to consider establishing a voluntary fund for training and other activities related to de-mining.

We also note that, in addition to this draft resolution addressing mine removal, two draft resolutions relating to land-mines are being submitted in the First Committee. This year the United States plans to submit a draft resolution that calls for a world-wide moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines - those which pose a grave danger to civilian populations. In addition, we expect that the annual resolution on the conventional weapons Convention will include a paragraph calling for a review conference to consider, among other things, aspects of the Convention relating to anti-personnel land-mines.

Last year the United States Government began a unilateral moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. The United States Senate recently passed unanimously a three-year extension of that moratorium. We expect the House of Representatives to vote on that issue shortly. We urge all Member States to join my Government in support of these efforts to rid the world of land-mines, both by regulating their export and by developing de-mining assistance and training programmes around the world.

Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan): I should like first of all to express my Government's appreciation to the countries members of the European Community for taking the lead in promoting the inclusion on the agenda of this new item, "Assistance in mine clearance", which is certain to help draw the attention of the world to a most pressing problem.

It has been said that the indiscriminate maiming of innocent people by land-mines left undetonated and unretrieved after a period of civil conflict is an affront to the international conscience. Many tens of millions of mines are thought to remain scattered around countries that have been the scene of such conflict, and they are taking a toll in human life. They continue to be a major impediment to the smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need even after hostilities cease. Not only do they represent a constant threat to the lives of civilians: they also hamper the repatriation of refugees and resettlement of displaced persons, thus affecting activities at all stages, from relief to development, of the process by which a country strives to restore itself to health after a conflict comes to an end.

In "An Agenda for Peace" the Secretary-General addresses the problem of land-mines and their terrible consequences, emphasizing the urgency of mine clearance for any nation setting off on the road to peace and reconstruction. At its last session, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 47/120 B, which endorses as useful the proposals he made in this area. My Government fully subscribes to those proposals and considers that de-mining efforts should also be emphasized in the terms of reference of peace-keeping operations.

In his annual Report on the work of the Organization (A/48/1), the Secretary-General also stated that the United Nations has launched a concerted drive to address this issue by mobilizing the competent organs of the system. Mine-clearing operations are already in place in Afghanistan and Cambodia, and in such countries as Angola, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, where they are part of peace-keeping and humanitarian efforts. My Government is very much encouraged by the report of the Secretary-General and the specific steps he has taken.

For its part, Japan has contributed to de-mining operations in Somalia and Afghanistan by extending $0.2 million and $14 million, respectively. This is indeed a matter of grave humanitarian concern to my country.

Speaking for the European Community, the representative of Belgium has urged that a more comprehensive programme of action for mine clearance be established under United Nations auspices, especially in light of the difficulties such operations have experienced in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Mozambique. Mine-clearing is a labor-intensive and long-term undertaking, which requires ample resources, good planning and technical know-how to ensure the desired outcome. The principal responsibility for mine clearance rests with the country in whose territory the mines are located, but a concerted effort on the part of the international community to support these operations is also essential.

Draft resolution A/48/L.5 contains several valid arguments and constructive proposals, particularly those underlining the importance of United Nations led coordination of mine-clearance activities and the need to improve the effectiveness of activities in the field. It is my Government's view that, while the priority accorded mine clearance may change over time, and with it responsibility for a given operation, effectiveness and cost-efficiency must be maintained. To this end, my Government requests the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report that will put this broad subject in perspective for us and provide common ground for a coherent programme.

Japan supports this draft resolution, proposed by the member countries of the European Community, and joins them in sponsoring it.

Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): When the Foreign Secretary of my country addressed this Assembly last month, he expressed the strong concern of the Sierra Leone delegation over the proliferation in the use of mines and other such explosive devices in areas of conflict, especially in intra-State conflicts.

Against the background of the Liberian conflict, we in Sierra Leone have been victims on two fronts: first, having to cope with the spill-over effects of that conflict; and, secondly, dealing with a war imposed on us by one of the factions in the conflict for allowing our country to be used as a base for the peace-keeping operation in Liberia, one of whose main features has been the killing and maiming of civilians and the disruption of meaningful socio-economic activity through the planting of land-mines. Those weapons, planted in a primitive and imprecise manner, have proved deadly for our citizens, and those who have survived have been left in appalling conditions. Unexploded mines have made the task of post-war reconstruction complicated and all the more difficult for my country.

Indeed, to quote the Secretary-General in his report to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly on the work of the Organization:

> "Of all the tasks involved in setting a nation on a new road to peace and prosperity, perhaps none has the immediate urgency of mine clearance". (*A/48/1, para. 459*)

And he went on:

> "no attempt to restore a sense of community and security can succeed without effective land-mine removal". (*ibid.*)

The Secretary-General's comments could not be more true. The grim statistics - which in many instances are at best inaccurate assumptions - paint an alarming picture, one in which the increased use of these anti-personnel devices has serious consequences far beyond their military objectives. They now claim as victims more civilian non-combatants on all continents. Recent figures showing approximately 50 million land-mines in 10 countries around the world are, in our view, conservative and do not take into account fully their use in situations of conflict of a non-international character. Sierra Leone wishes to take note of the establishment of a coordinated mine-clearance programme within the Secretariat which, we hope, will serve as a clearing-house for training and technical facilities for Member States in this area.

For societies like mine, whose economies are already weakened, this activity imposes an unacceptably high strain on medical facilities which are already inadequate. The indiscriminate and very often unrecorded planting of land-mines in areas of generally high economic potential - such as farming, grazing and mining areas - ensures that the post-conflict resumption of economic activity and commerce is hindered considerably. The consequences of this are obvious. That is why we believe that the initiative of the European Community to inscribe this item on assistance in mine clearance on this session's agenda could not have been more timely. It thus brings to the attention of the international community the need to take concrete steps in dealing with this scourge, which the International Committee of the Red Cross has described as an active menace used to terrorize populations with the goal of denying access to land.

My delegation sees draft resolution A/48/L.5, which we have co-sponsored, as a first step in encouraging a coordinated approach on the part of the United Nations to the issue of mine clearance, especially through the provision of resources, training, technical assistance and the establishment of humanitarian, social and economic programmes to enable Member States so afflicted to embark on mine clearance and to rehabilitate the victims for their reintegration into society.

Beyond that, however, there must, in our view, be unequivocal action by the international community to outlaw the production, sale and use of these devices which, by their indiscriminate spreading of death and severe maiming, have no place in civilized society.

Sierra Leone therefore fully supports the draft resolution and looks forward to the appropriate follow-up action on it.

Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan): The consideration of the issue of mine clearance by the General Assembly is a welcome development. The problems posed by the indiscriminate laying of millions of mines in many parts of the world are now of such great magnitude that they can only be resolved by the concerted action of the entire international community.

The techniques of mine-laying as well as the nature of land-mines themselves have undergone changes which have had the most horrendous consequences. Mines are no longer deployed in localized areas as tactical battlefield weapons. Instead, they are carpeted over vast stretches of land, the apparent objective being to strike terror among civilians and to empty territory. Many of the most tragic victims of such mines are children who are maimed for the rest of their lives.

The question arises as to what course of action should be adopted by the world community. We are of the view that a series of steps should be taken in three areas: measures to impart training and know-how to affected countries; measures to improve mine-clearance technology; and, finally, measures to strengthen the legal norms regarding the use of mines.

Most of the countries that are affected by the problem of uncleared minefields lack the expertise to clear and neutralize unexploded mines. The United Nations agencies and the Member States can be of immense help by setting up institutional mechanisms for the exchange of information and know-how, as well in the training of personnel in mine-clearance techniques. In this regard, we greatly appreciate the measures taken by the European Community to strengthen the mine-clearing capabilities of affected countries.

As regards technology, attention needs to be given to two separate aspects. Studies should be conducted with a view to evolving more efficient and modern techniques for clearing mines and unexploded devices from large areas. Present mine-clearing tools, which have been described by scientists as "glorified farm implements", are clearly inadequate for the task. Secondly, there is a need to consider the desirability of ensuring that all mines have built-in mechanisms for rendering them inactive after a certain period.

It is necessary, also, to take steps to strengthen the legal sanctions against the indiscriminate use of land mines. Stricter rules should be formulated to compel armies to record the locations of mines so that they can be removed after the cessation of hostilities. Carpet mining, the dropping of mines from aeroplanes and other methods of scattering mines indiscriminately must be prohibited. Also, a ban on the use of mines that have a disproportionate effect on the civilian population, especially anti-personnel mines, needs to be considered.

There is, furthermore, a need for inflicting penalties on the parties responsible for the indiscriminate use of land mines. The principle of "abuser pays" is relevant in this context and should be applied forcefully. Those who sow the mines should be made to reap the consequences of paying for their removal and destruction. It is also our view that the affected parties should not be asked to bear the immense and prolonged costs of rehabilitating a maimed and injured populace. Rather, the costs should be borne by the countries that resort to such inhuman forms of warfare.

We are of the opinion that these legal measures can be considered in a review Conference of the 1980 Convention prohibiting the use of inhuman weapons - especially Protocol II of this Convention regarding the use of mines, booby traps and other devices. We, of course, support the moves being made to convene such a conference in the near future. We also pay a tribute to the work being done by the International Committee of the Red Cross on this subject.

Pakistan will continue to take a keen interest in this issue. As Member States are well aware, we ourselves are affected seriously by the fallout from the land-mine warfare conducted by the Soviet Army against Afghanistan. Our medical resources have been stretched thin in an effort to treat and rehabilitate the thousands of Afghans who have been crippled by mines. We continue to host, even today, a million and a half Afghan refugees, who, quite understandably, are not in a position to return to their mine-strewn homeland. All efforts for the reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan, and for the resettlement of its people, are bound to fail until the problem of mine-clearance is addressed and resolved. Pakistan is committed to contributing all that it can to the resolution of this problem. We expect the international community's active assistance in this task.

Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On behalf of the Central American countries, I wish to emphasize the particular importance

our countries attach to this item, which was introduced so generously by the members of the European Community.

It is estimated that at the present time there are more than 100 million land-mines scattered in more than 60 countries. The seriousness and the cruelty of the indiscriminate use of mines without any type of controls or any appropriate registry of their location, as recommended by international law, have not respected any border. In areas reaching from Afghanistan to Cambodia and Ethiopia, in Kuwait, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Peru and the former Republic of Yugoslavia, to mention just a few examples, the spectre of human suffering is enormous, encompassing thousands of persons killed or maimed and damage to the national infrastructure. Especially cruel is the odious practice of disguising these lethal weapons as toys, thus endangering the lives of the most innocent.

In the case of Nicaragua, for instance, it is estimated that some 160,000 mines resulting from the conflict of the past decade have not yet been located. A similar situation prevails in other countries of Central America.

According to statistics of the International Committee of the Red Cross, 23 per cent of those killed by mine explosions in Afghanistan and Cambodia were children. In Kabul, 50 per cent were women and children. In Somalia, 74.6 per cent of the victims of mines were children between the ages of 5 and 15. Given this serious situation, the United Nations and the various human rights groups and international organizations have alerted the international community to the devastating effects of the use of mines, since these are used not only for military purposes but also with the objective of breaking down the operational capacity and the morale of the enemy, affecting mainly the defenceless civilian population.

The political, economic and social crisis in Central America, which reached a high point in the 1980s, impeded development in the countries of the region, worsened the poverty levels, intensified the arms race, and resulted in 300,000 deaths and 2 million refugees and displaced persons. All of this had a direct impact on hundreds of Central American families because of the violence, which was the common denominator of the crisis.

The number of victims of war in Nicaragua alone amounts to more than 100,000, of whom 16,000 persons are incapacitated, many of them as a result of mine explosions. Most of these are young people, women and children, for whose sake the Government has undertaken various initiatives and is making great efforts to generate employment or produce benefits. Our countries, which for more than a decade have suffered the effects of war, can on the basis of their own experience bear witness to the tragic situation confronting any country with broad geographical regions that have been mined.

As far as mine clearance is concerned, Nicaragua has thus far enjoyed the cooperation of the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Defense Board and that of friendly countries. We have concluded the preparatory, preliminary stage of mine-clearing and have trained officials and members of the army of our country in mine destruction. This project is being duly implemented, thus removing the danger from areas that are needed for agriculture and for livestock. None the less, further efforts are necessary.

Resolution 47/56, on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and in particular on the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, is of particular importance for our countries. We ought in future to avoid completely the use of mines, and in this way remove serious obstacles which prolong the effects of war even in times of peace.

In this connection, it is of great importance to our countries that peace-keeping operations include in their mandate, once peace has been achieved, the destruction of arms as well as the removal of mines, which in most cases continue to cause the loss of innocent human lives even after the achievement of peace. The Central American countries support the proposal made by the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277): in the chapter on post-conflict peace-building, he underscores the importance of removing mines from those countries that are victims of conflict because of the harmful effects of the presence of mines and other unexploded devices.

In Central America, the presence of mines and other explosive devices has claimed many victims. Not only are their effects a risk to the civilian population but they also significantly hinder the recovery and reconstruction of the economy and the establishment of normalcy in civilian society.

We agree with the Secretary-General that of all the tasks involved in setting a nation on a new road to peace and prosperity, perhaps none has the immediate urgency of mine clearance, and that no attempt to restore a sense of community and security can succeed without effective

land-mine removal. For the Central American countries, this is a task that cannot be put off.

We are convinced that in all countries that are victims of armed conflicts the main responsibility for mine clearance falls to the State where the mines were laid. But we must take into account the enormous, priority tasks facing countries - most of them developing countries - that, like Nicaragua, have been devastated by the effects of war; after long years of conflict, they have to make great efforts to achieve reconciliation and economic and social development, and they do not have the necessary technical and financial resources to carry out complete mine clearance.

It has been estimated that it will be several decades before the millions of mines can be cleared; Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, has said that the experts estimate that it may take 40 or 50 years for the spectre of minefields to be laid to rest. Therefore, we think it both urgent and timely for the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution (A/48/L.5) on assistance in mine clearance. Our delegations are in complete agreement over both the meaning and the scope of this document.

Of particular importance is the establishment of a voluntary trust fund to support information and training programmes relating to mine clearance activities. Our delegations nevertheless consider that the work still to be done is very complex, and that it is therefore vital for the United Nations, with the support of the international community, to expand its mine clearance assistance programmes.

Accordingly, the United Nations must give priority to ensuring humanitarian assistance and transit for refugees, tightening up coordination between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and peace-keeping operations and thoroughly considering various ways to enhance resources for programmes that fund mine clearance. It should also gather information and collate work on researching and analysing the existing legal instruments, with a view to adapting them to the new international realities.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Ecuador welcomes the initiative of the States members of the European Community and by the Nordic countries in proposing to the Assembly, in draft resolution A/48/L.5, that a series of actions should be taken by the international community to deal with the serious problem of the mines that have been laid in various parts of the world.

Bodies within the United Nations system, and many others, both intergovernmental and private, have been taking measures to cooperate with States facing the tragic situation caused by the matter which we are now discussing. If the draft resolution is adopted, we are convinced that those efforts can be coordinated properly and that the valuable experience of States and other entities involved can be put, in a flexible, timely and effective manner, at the service of those who need it most.

The figures speak for themselves. Estimates of the number of mines to be cleared range from 100 million to 200 million, scattered all over the world: Afghanistan, Guatemala, Cambodia, Mozambique, Laos, Somalia and elsewhere. This is a menace to the civilian population in many regions. However, statistics about the victims are scarce. Suffice it to say that for every survivor there are two deaths. Of the survivors, about three out of four require amputations. In the affected countries, two people per thousand have been hurt by these devices, and in some countries - Somalia, for example - over 70 per cent of the wounded are children under 15.

Just a few minutes ago, the representative of Nicaragua reminded us of the statements in this connection by Nicaragua's Foreign Minister, who speaks of the huge task it will be to get rid of 160,000 mines in 800 different places, of which some 200 are unknown. According to official accounts, Nicaragua has one mine for every 30 people.

Ecuador, faithful to its humanist and humanitarian principles, cannot remain indifferent in the face of this terrifying situation, and has therefore decided to support the draft resolution, as we consider it a step in the right direction. However, we believe that in preparing the report, requested in paragraph 5, on the feasibility of establishing a fund to finance mine clearance programmes, the Secretary-General should take into account the special responsibility of the countries that produce and export such devices.

According to a report by the International Committee of the Red Cross, one State alone has an annual turnover of $168 million in cluster mine systems, including anti-personnel components. The opportunities opening up on the international markets for these new mine systems are prompting many companies to invest in developing new technologies, which are not only boosting profits in one sector of the arms market, but are also improving the mines to prevent their removal and destruction.

Although this is a subject that will be dealt with in due course by the First Committee, which is responsible for disarmament matters, I believe that when financial mechanisms for mine clearance are being worked out those that benefit financially from selling mines should shoulder their responsibility and contribute to financing programmes to eliminate this menace to the civilian population. Taking a small margin from their profits would make it possible to carry out this humanitarian task, and would have two advantages: for one thing, it would avoid having to impose a further burden of contributions on countries that are increasingly reluctant to allocate funds for international cooperation; for another, it would point clearly to where legal responsibility - not only the moral responsibility - for this universal problem lies.

Similarly, in drafting the report requested in the draft resolution, the Secretary-General will have to take into account the specific obligations, under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, of States that have laid mines.

We therefore urge Member States to take these considerations into account when they draft their responses to the Secretary-General, and we request the Secretary-General to design and propose appropriate mechanisms for putting those suggestions into practice, in an effective manner, in implementation of the draft resolution, which we are convinced will be adopted overwhelmingly today.

Mr. NOBILO (Croatia): I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and to compliment you on your achievements thus far.

I should also like to commend the European Community for undertaking the valuable initiative of having the item "Assistance in mine clearance" included on the Agenda. This item is of far-reaching importance to post-war reconstruction and peace-building measures in troubled areas around the world.

From Cambodia and Afghanistan to Mozambique and Croatia, 150 precious human lives are lost each week, not at the hands of ruthless snipers or the impact of intentionally fired mortars, but because of well-camouflaged land-mines. The United Nations Secretariat estimates that 62 countries are infested with nearly 100 million land mines. The Republic of Croatia is one of those countries. At present in Croatia 300,000 hectares of land have been seeded with nearly 3 million mines and 1 million hectares contain various kinds of other explosive devices.

The minefields on Croatian territory are not only seriously jeopardizing the security of the people living in the area; mines are also inflicting a heavy burden on the Croatian economy. Therefore, my Government has been forced to undertake a programme to free its land of explosive devices. Unfortunately this task is very hard to carry out, especially since we have limited resources and insufficient equipment. Furthermore, Croatia has witnessed the passage of two harvest cycles which have left massive amounts of foliage and ground vegetation, impairing normal visibility, which can be vital to detection. These complications on the ground also create optimal conditions for accidental detonation, further threatening the lives of civilians and specially trained mine-clearing personnel.

Croatia, facing as it does economic hardships, and considering the great financial and technological requirements for a programme of land-mine clearance, is incapable of solving the problem singlehandedly, although it is trying to extract from its own programme the maximum benefits possible. At present the Croatian Government is accommodating 270,000 displaced persons and well over 280,000 refugees from the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to funding humanitarian assistance for half a million people, Croatia is struggling with heavy economic losses and industrial decay as a result of devastating Serbian aggression. The presence of land mines has caused an annual loss of $230 million in the agricultural sector alone and an additional $70 million has been lost in forestry and hunting. Because of these conditions, 330,000 hectares of land sits unworked.

A comprehensive international programme for assistance in mine clearance is an important step in the overall process of the reconstruction of countries in the post-conflict phase. In applying the mine-clearing programme to each country, specific circumstances must be reconsidered, and not only from the geographical or technical point of view. For Croatia such a programme would ease economic recovery and the reinstatement of a secure and normal living environment, facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, alleviate transportation and communication barriers, safeguard civilians and United Nations personnel and facilitate the reintegration of the United Nations protected areas into the Republic of Croatia.

Mines pose a continuous threat to the lives and security of United Nations personnel serving in peace-

keeping missions. They restrict the movement of United Nations forces, whether they are delivering humanitarian aid or keeping the peace in hostile areas. This is an additional, but important, reason why the question of "Assistance in mine clearance" must have its place on the United Nations agenda.

The Republic of Croatia co-sponsored the draft resolution before the General Assembly, in the sincere hope that the results of our discussion today will soon be visible in the areas which at present, because of mines, have been turned into "killing fields".

Mr. KEATING (New Zealand): Land mines are an insidious scourge. They are killing and maiming people, particularly civilians, in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe.

New Zealand joins earlier speakers in expressing deep concern about the devastating effects that randomly laid, uncharted and uncleared land mines are having on civilians in countries such as Cambodia, Mozambique and the former Yugoslavia.

In addition to their devastating impact on individuals who come in contact with them, land mines have very harmful social and economic effects. Uncleared land mines laid in fields, forests and watercourses prevent the growing of food and crops, the raising of livestock and the rehabilitation of land. These weapons are denying civilians in war-ravaged areas the right to social and economic recovery.

The United Nations's peace-keeping operations are also affected, and in some cases threatened, by land mines which jeopardize the safety of peace-keeping personnel.

New Zealand fully supports the call for a comprehensive programme of assistance with mine clearance. For us, this is not merely an item of theoretical interest. New Zealand peace-keepers have witnessed the devastating effects of land mines during numerous United Nations operations in countries such as Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia, and have themselves suffered casualties from these weapons. New Zealand has contributed over the years to the mine-clearance training programme in Afghanistan.

De-mining is also an important part of New Zealand's contribution to United Nations efforts to rehabilitate parts of Cambodia. New Zealand personnel are working with other peace-keepers involved in the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) process to establish the Cambodian Mine Action Centre. The Centre controls de-mining operations, mine awareness and education programmes in Cambodia, and it is expected that the Cambodian Government will soon take over the operation.

Controls on the use of land mines are few. The only specific multilateral agreement controlling the use of land mines is Protocol II of what is commonly known as the inhumane weapons Convention.

The Convention itself is a significant document, but States parties need to address some serious weaknesses which limit its effectiveness, particularly in regard to Protocol II. For example, while it calls for the clearance of land mines after a conflict ends, no verification mechanism exists for ensuring compliance. Also, in cases where non-compliance is clear, the Convention lacks any enforcement provisions. New Zealand therefore supports the call for a review conference which will seek to strengthen the Convention by considering these issues. Such a conference should concentrate with the utmost urgency on the issue of land mines and make effective controls on these weapons its first priority.

In order to make plain our abhorrence of the effects of land mines and to become fully engaged in the review conference process, New Zealand has ratified the Convention. We urge others to do the same. We note that it seems likely that the review conference will be held in 1995, which should give signatories plenty of opportunity to ratify.

In the meantime, until the review gets under way, we would encourage dialogue on land-mines issues between interested States, and we support proposals to establish a group of experts to facilitate discussions in the run-up to the conference.

The use of land-mines by States is not the only problem. A further issue of concern is that land-mines have in recent times been used in conflicts not only by States but also by groups that are not able to be represented at the United Nations negotiating table. Some type of effective control must also be put on the use of land-mines by groups that could not become a party to any convention.

Such an issue can be addressed by examining the trade in land-mines and adopting measures to limit or prevent their supply. In this context, New Zealand acknowledges the unilateral actions of the United States

and France in placing moratoriums on the transfer of land mines.

New Zealand considers the random, widespread use of land-mines and the effect they are having on civilians to be a problem of the gravest concern. We must work together to foster controls on the use of these weapons.

New Zealand is already working with other countries under the auspices of the United Nations, and we shall continue to provide what assistance we can on practical mine clearance when that is needed.

New Zealand therefore wholeheartedly supports the present draft resolution, which seeks to encourage, organize and coordinate national, regional and global assistance on mine clearance.

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in these deliberations on the new and important agenda item on mine clearance. We have heard many delegations stress the importance of this issue, in regard to which a draft resolution is before us.

In his report on the work of the Organization, which we considered just last week, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of mine-clearing. He stated that

> "Of all the tasks involved in setting a nation on a new road to peace and prosperity, perhaps none has the immediate urgency of mine clearance". *(A/48/1, para. 459)*

In his report he mentions the situation in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, saying:

> "Tens of millions of mines have been left in areas of conflict". *(ibid.)*

The presence of mines is a major obstacle to human resettlement, the restoration of transport infrastructure and, indeed, socio-economic recovery. The Secretary-General concluded that no attempt to restore a sense of community and security can succeed without effective land-mine removal.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's launching of a coordinated programme of action on mine clearance involving the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and other competent bodies.

The Secretary-General has reported that in Afghanistan at least 10 million mines were left behind after the recent war. These remaining uncleared mines continue to hinder seriously the restoration of normal life in many parts of that country. The Secretary-General also mentions in his report the successful use of mine-detecting dogs. Thailand is proud to have participated in this effort. Mine-detecting dog teams from the Royal Thai Army were involved not only in the actual mine clearance but also in the training of local mine-clearing dog teams.

In Cambodia, where the country is entering a new phase of national reconciliation and rehabilitation following the successful holding of general elections and the establishment of a new Government, a number of challenging obstacles and problems remain to be overcome. Of high priority is the question of the resettlement of thousands of displaced persons and demobilized soldiers. These people, Cambodia's most valuable human assets, should be able to return to their villages, lead their lives in normalcy and thus contribute to the strengthening of the country's economy. Unfortunately, resettlement has proved difficult, since a large part of Cambodia was mined during the decade-long armed conflict. According to the Secretary-General, approximately 5 million mines are spread all over the eastern districts. For this very reason, we view de-mining as one of the essential prerequisites in Cambodia's reconstruction process. Failure to carry this out would jeopardize thousands of lives and put the safety of the international personnel involved in humanitarian and development assistance in constant danger.

It has also been said that the war in Cambodia may have been the first in history in which more people were killed by mines than by any other type of armament. Even now the people of Cambodia are still, tragically, dying or losing their limbs at the rate of 200 to 300 a month because of some 4 million land-mines left behind. Sadly, such a situation exists not only in Cambodia but also in Angola, Afghanistan, Mozambique and elsewhere. My delegation therefore joins in urging the international community not to be oblivious to the importance of the issue of mine-clearance and to assist these countries in an endeavour which, taking into account the millions of mines involved, may last for decades.

On its part, Thailand has dispatched two engineering battalions to Cambodia to assist in mine clearance and highway rehabilitation - one battalion as part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and the other as part of our bilateral assistance to Cambodia - in addition to other forms of bilateral assistance in human-resources development. I do not wish to overstate

Thailand's contribution; yet, however token it may seem, it clearly demonstrates our willingness to lend assistance where possible and whenever required. Indeed, Thailand is prepared to continue rendering the necessary assistance, as we have done in the past, be it in the area of infrastructure development or in human-resources development.

My delegation wishes to congratulate Belgium and the European Community, the original sponsors of this important and timely item, for bringing it to the attention of the General Assembly. We support the draft resolution before us, and have joined in sponsoring it. We look forward to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report, which he has been requested to submit prior to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We are also of the view that the possibility of establishing a voluntary trust fund for mine clearance should be explored.

My delegation joins in expressing the hope that the draft resolution before us will enjoy the widest possible support.

Prince SISOWATH SIRIRATH (Cambodia): First of all, my delegation would like to express sincere thanks to the European Community and various other friendly countries for taking the initiative of introducing draft resolution A/48/L.5, entitled "Assistance in mine clearance", under agenda item 155.

Cambodia has supposedly closed a 21-year chapter of the horrors of war, but the Cambodian people continue to suffer a relentless series of man-made disasters from the massive number of land-mines that were planted all over our country's fields during the war. Today, as a cease-fire takes effect thanks to the Paris Peace Agreement of 23 October 1991, and as peace once again reigns in the country, thousands of mines are still found along footpaths, in rice paddies and riverbeds and around villages and hamlets.

The people of my country refer to land-mines as "eternal sentinels" which never sleep and are always ready to strike. Unless these mines are cleared and destroyed, they will continue to kill innocent civilians well into the twenty-first century. Unlike bombs or artillery shells, which are specially designed to explode when they approach or hit their target, land-mines lie dormant until a person, a vehicle or an animal triggers their firing mechanism. These land-mines are blind weapons that cannot distinguish between a soldier and a civilian. They recognize no peace treaty or cease-fire. They will continue to exist long after the war is over; they will maim or kill the children and grandchildren of the soldiers who laid them.

In war or in peace, military personnel injured by land-mines stand a better chance of receiving prompt medical care than civilians. As we all know, foot soldiers usually travel in groups and carry first-aid and communication equipment. They can always radio their military bases or camps for help. On the other hand, few, if any, civilians caught in or near war zones have access to rapid-evacuation facilities. The civilians most likely to encounter land-mines are the rural poor who live far from towns or cities and who have access to no proper medical facilities. The poor peasants looking for wood and food or tilling their fields are particularly at risk. Children herding livestock are likewise extremely vulnerable. And, sometimes, children attracted by the unfamiliar and unaware of the hazard, play with mines, which they think are toys, with devastating results.

Even when civilians injured by land-mines reach medical facilities, they often fail to receive proper care because X-ray film, anaesthetics, surgical equipment and antibiotics are unavailable or in short supply. In general, the victims of land-mines are more likely to require amputations than victims wounded by other munitions.

Just last week, my Government, under the premiership of His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Ranariddh and His Excellency Mr. Hun Sen, addressed a letter to the Secretary-General on the critical problem of land-mines in Cambodia. They said that the mine problem in Cambodia at present is horrendous and is a major barrier to growth, development and safety. Mines kill or maim more than 300 Cambodians a month; they deny access to land on which to grow food and resettle displaced persons; they place a tremendous burden on an already limited infrastructure; and they deny Cambodians their basic right to a safe environment.

Cambodia, with a population of over 9 million, already has the highest percentage of physically disabled inhabitants of any country in the world. There are now over 40,000 amputees in Cambodia as a result of injury from mines. Most of the casualties have been civilian peasants who stepped on mines while gathering firewood, harvesting rice, herding animals or fishing. Nearly as many have died from loss of blood, undiscovered in the fields, or have succumbed to their wounds because no transport was available to get them to medical help.

Most amputees, when cured, leave hospital with little hope for the future. Cambodia is an agrarian country and

needs the muscle power of every able-bodied citizen for its survival. Our agriculture is very labour-intensive and requires the participation of everyone. A person who is physically disabled can become a burden to the family, becoming someone who eats but does not produce anything. I am saddened to report to the Assembly that after 21 years of war and suffering Cambodia still has no rehabilitation centres and no laws that can protect disabled persons against discrimination or exploitation.

But in the new Constitution promulgated by His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia, on 24 September 1993, the Royal Cambodian Government has set as a priority the creation of rehabilitation centres for disabled persons to help them adjust to their new life and prevent them from becoming beggars or petty criminals. Many amputees, unable to find work, nowadays drift to the capital city of Phnom Penh or to other large towns and become a burden to the Government and an unpleasant sight for visitors and Cambodians alike.

My delegation knows that the problem of land mines is not a problem in Cambodia alone, but that the same situation is found also in Afghanistan, Angola, Lebanon, Somalia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, countries which have been so devastated by long conflicts and wars.

My delegation is deeply grateful to the non-governmental organizations, such as Cambodia Trust of Great Britain, the Indochina Project and many others, and in particular to Handicap International, the Belgian-based humanitarian organization that has 13 prosthetics workshops throughout Cambodia; these organizations have helped in the rehabilitation of disabled Cambodians, victims of land-mines.

My delegation wishes to bring to the attention of the representatives here the problem of land-mines which lie scattered throughout Cambodia, and requests the ongoing help and cooperation of the international community to remove as many of them as possible.

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia will officially end its duty in Cambodia on 15 November 1993. The international staff will have left Cambodia by then, and no advisers will be available to assist the Cambodians with safety, technical matters, logistics, communications and finances and to liaison with the United Nations Cambodia Mine Action Centre's de-mining trust fund. De-mining operations so far as we know, will no longer function as of 1 November 1993.

United Nations assistance is required immediately if a timely remedy is to be found. Bilateral solutions have been proposed and investigated, but that process will take months; the Cambodia Mine Action Centre will wither and a major effort will be required to start it again.

A solution to the problem of land-mines in Cambodia is required urgently. It appears that the only solution for continuing the de-mining is an extension of remaining international staff at the Cambodia Mine Action Centre for a period of 60 days while all issues are resolved.

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia has accomplished so much by setting up the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, and it would make no sense to allow it to close for lack of a small international advisory group. The Cambodian Mine Action Centre has so far cleared over 3,800,000 square meters of mine fields. This dangerous task requires a sizeable budget for special equipment for the next five to ten years. My delegation hopes that the international community can help make Cambodia safe for present and future generations.

Given the importance attached by many concerned countries to this critical issue, my delegation urges the support of the international community in obtaining their help and cooperation. My delegation is also fully aware of the significant participation by the international community in responding to the problem of land-mines in Cambodia, and we are profoundly grateful to those who have reacted in an extremely positive manner and indicated their willingness to continue helping Cambodia recover from this terrible nightmare.

It is in this context that my delegation is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/48/L.5, entitled "Assistance in mine clearance", under agenda item 155.

Mr. ELHOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The areas which at one time or another were theatres of military operations and in whose soil large numbers of land-mines were planted have continued to be a grave source of fear and anxiety. On the one hand, this existence of land-mines continues to impede economic development and obstruct every effort to limit degradation of the environment. For a long time now, the General Assembly has been demonstrating its awareness of the devastating effects of land-mines by adopting numerous resolutions on the issue, the latest being resolution 40/197. In those resolutions, the Assembly highlighted the dangers resulting from the presence of the material remnants of war, especially land-mines, because of loss of life,

destruction of property and grave obstruction of efforts aimed at land reclamation and reconstruction.

The Secretary-General, in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), accorded considerable attention to the problem of land-mines. He emphasized the urgent need for de-mining because of the danger land-mines pose to people's lives and the adverse effects they have on economic activity especially in the areas of reviving agriculture and road building. In discussing "An Agenda for Peace" in the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, my delegation thanked the Secretary-General for dealing with this problem, and particularly for his emphasis on the need to address the grave problem of land-mines which remain scattered in many areas of past hostilities as is the case with regard to my country which was one of the theatres of military operations in the Second World War. Large numbers of land-mines were planted in our soil during that war. Mine explosions have resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and the continued presence of minefields still obstructs our efforts to combat drought and desertification and hampers our attempts to promote land reclamation.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the General Assembly has agreed to inscribe an item on the agenda of this session entitled "Assistance in mine clearance". By the same token, my delegation welcomes the draft resolution under this item which is contained in document A/48/L.5 as the contents of the draft address some of our concerns, particularly in its reference to paragraph 58 of "An Agenda for Peace", which deals with the problems arising from land-mines in present or former combat zones. We had hoped for a clear explicit reference to this problem in the draft resolution. By the same token, we believe that the draft resolution should have taken into consideration some of the other aspects of the problem of land-mines by calling upon the States responsible for planting those land-mines to submit all the necessary information and technical assistance required in mine clearance activities as well as payment of compensation for the damage caused to States in whose soil land mines were planted as was previously called for in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and other bodies and organizations, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations Development Programme.

While expressing its position *vis-à-vis* the problem of land mines and how to deal with their collateral effects, our delegation hopes that the resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly in this regard will contribute to solving this problem. In this connection, my delegation wishes to emphasize in particular the contents of operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, which urges all Member States to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General in this respect and to provide him with any information and data which would be useful in drawing up the report he will submit to the next session of the General Assembly.

Ms. TREIMANIS (Latvia): I am speaking on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia.

We welcome the initiative of the European community in proposing the inclusion of the item entitled "Assistance in mine clearance" in the agenda of the General Assembly. We should like to emphasize that mine clearance is a necessary component of peace-building, since it assists in establishing the conditions for lasting peace in areas of conflict and tension. We share the concern about the serious humanitarian, social, economic and ecological destruction which can and will be caused by the failure to remove mines, as well as the harm caused by remaining minefields to the civilian population and peace-keeping missions in countries stricken by armed conflict. Assistance in mine clearance is of crucial importance to these countries, as they lack the necessary resources to clear the huge minefields left by armed conflict. This matter is not the business of the affected countries alone, but a subject of concern for all States, as the security of every region is in the interest of each and every member of the world community. We believe that the work in mine clearing should be pursued on the basis of a programme of the United Nations and in cooperation with regional organizations. Such a programme would provide the necessary assistance to launch the clearance operations as well as provide relevant information and training programmes to all countries.

It is appropriate to point out that this assistance be provided not only to countries that have recently experienced civil strife and war but also to countries that are undergoing the transition caused by recent major political changes. The Baltic States are facing this problem as part of the consequence of the illegal presence of the foreign military forces on their sovereign soil. Those forces have abused our soil and are leaving behind considerable acreage with large numbers of unexploded devices. There are also numerous ammunition depots which need clearance.

There are many sites in the Baltic States which are extremely dangerous. In Latvia there are more than 42,000 hectares of territory that need clearance and that contain an estimated 24,000 unexploded devices. It would take Latvia, with its limited technical knowledge and personnel

resources, 30 years to clear these sites. Many of the depots and armaments date back to the Second World War. The lack of necessary technical and personnel resources to carry out successfully the clearance of sites creates a potential danger for the civilian population and prohibits the recovery of any land for peaceful agricultural purposes.

We are co-sponsoring the draft resolution, "Assistance in mine clearance", guided by the conviction that the successful implementation of the text to be adopted will contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the world, save lives and help promote a speedier recovery of the affected lands for peaceful purposes.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.5.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/48/L.5?

Draft resolution A/48/L.5 was adopted (resolution 48/7).

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Cuba, who wishes to explain his delegation's position. May I recall that such explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. RIVERO (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation wishes to explain its position on draft resolution A/48/L.5, which was submitted under agenda item 155 by the delegations of the European Economic Community and others, and which is entitled "Assistance in mine clearance."

My delegation associates itself with those delegations that have expressed concern about the effects of the existence of minefields on the civilian population in countries that have experienced armed conflicts, and it associates itself with the need to proceed to clear such areas. In light of those considerations Cuba participated actively in the Conference held under United Nations auspices in the early 1980s, which resulted in the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its three Protocols, one of which deals specifically with mines.

In addition, my delegation recognizes that the need for mine-clearing operations has taken on greater urgency in recent years owing to conflicts that have taken place recently, and that various actions have been taken by international and non-governmental organizations in this regard. None the less, although my delegation has joined in the consensus on the draft resolution because it shares the humanitarian spirit that inspires it, we do wish to place on record a few considerations of a political and technical nature that we view as important.

First, the question of mine clearance is one of the subjects considered in the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace," and on which negotiations have been held and certain decisions reached. My delegation feels it is inappropriate to extract specific matters from the body of subjects and proposals in "An Agenda for Peace" on which decisions have been taken, since such a practice may lead to a proliferation of resolutions that could seriously complicate our work and lead to possible confusion.

Secondly, any consideration of the conduct of mine-clearing activities should take place within the framework of General Assembly resolution 47/120 B, which, as has been recalled, stresses that post-conflict peace-building activities can only be undertaken once the conflicts have been ended, and must be agreed upon by the parties or carried out on the basis of agreements ending conflicts.

Thirdly, there is a balanced reference in the draft resolution to the serious threat that mines and other unexploded devices constitute to the safety, the health and the lives of personnel participating in humanitarian, peace-keeping and rehabilitation operations, as well as among civilian populations.

Fourthly, the terms of the consideration requested from the Secretary-General of the financial aspects of activities related to mine clearance are very ambiguous. My delegation is of the view that such activities should be financed by a voluntary trust fund and that consideration should also be given - as the delegation of Ecuador has pointed out - to financing of such activities by the countries that produce and export mines. In any event, information and training programmes and mine-clearing activities in general should be totally financed by such a fund.

Fifthly, the draft resolution tends to establish a mechanism that we view as parallel to the mechanism provided for in Article 9 of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices to the 1980 Convention to which I referred earlier, which includes the modalities for international cooperation

in mine-clearance. Article 8 of that Protocol refers to the protection of United Nations forces or missions from the effects of minefields.

Lastly, we consider it somewhat contradictory that today, when efforts are being made to achieve what has been called the rationalization of our work, this draft resolution, which refers basically to mines, is being submitted to the General Assembly when we are aware that two additional draft resolutions dealing with mines will also be submitted to the First Committee, one aimed at establishing a moratorium on the export of antipersonnel mines and the other aimed at convening a review conference on the 1980 Convention with a view to possible modifications with regard to mines. My delegation believes that this matter should have been considered in an integrated way in a single forum, namely, the First Committee, in a text that could have dealt with the question in all its aspects.

The PRESIDENT: Since no other delegation wishes to speak, may I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 155?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.